



New Haven Democracy Fund

"To ensure that all the citizens of New Haven have a fair and meaningful opportunity to participate in the election of mayor."
New Haven Code of General Ordinances, Chapter 2, Article XI, §2-321 • Established in 2007 • democracyfund@newhavenct.net



DEMOCRACY FUND BOARD MEETING

6:00 pm Wednesday, July 21, 2021

Virtual Meeting via Zoom

New Haven Democracy Fund Board:

Sergio Rodriguez, Chair

Members: Aaron Goode, James O'Connell, William Wynn, James Bhandary-Alexander

Democracy Fund Administrator: Alyson Heimer

AGENDA:

1. Meeting called to order at 6:16pm. Wynn absent. Goode not present for the early vote.
2. Motion to approve minutes from previous meeting by O'Connell. 3-0-0
3. Public Comment

Barbara Segaloff, representing the Justin Elicker Campaign, expressed her thanks to the New Haven Democracy Fund Board and Administrator Heimer for the work done to review the latest round of matching funds, as well as the disbursement of the grant on 6/30/21.

Will Viederman, representing the Karen DuBois-Walton campaign seconded the sentiment and added thanks for the attention to detail and efforts made to ensure campaigns were able to address the simple data discrepancies that would have otherwise prevented the disbursement of matching funds.

4. Chair Rodriguez thanked the campaigns for their appreciations and the Administrator Heimer for her efforts in the second round of matching funding being completed for the Primary.

5. Administrator's Report

- a. State Elections Enforcement Commission (SEEC) investigation update
 - i. The SEEC met earlier in the day on 7/21/21 to hear the findings of the complaint filed by Ms. Kimberly Agyekum Re: Timeline of announcing candidacy. They dismissed the case unanimously. This subject therefore requires no further action by the Board.
- b. Matching Funds Disbursement and other municipal elections updates
 - \$18,358.22 to Elicker for Mayor
 - \$9,060 to KDW 2021

Checks were dated incorrectly. The ledger for the NHDF account reflects the funds leaving the account on 6/30/21. The Checks were cut on 6/30/21 but they were dated for 7/3/21. This mismatch caused both campaigns to reach pout and ask if the Grant should be included in the July 10 Filing, which covers the period of 4/1/21 to 6/30/21. This mismatch also changes the city's fiscal year in which the funds are documented with the Finance Department as 7/3/21.

Resolution was that candidates include the \$20,000 Democracy Fund grant in the July 10 report to maximize the transparency of funding and cash on hand for the campaigns. Those filings are with the City Clerk's office.

c. Correspondence -

There was upheaval within her campaign team that put her out of compliance with the City and the Fund - missing the July 10 filing deadline. The Torres Campaign Treasurer Cathy Vassallo resigned from her position shortly after the due date for the July 10 Filing had passed (7/14/21) but no filing for the campaign had been delivered to the Town Clerk or SEEC by that deadline or as of the meeting.

There was a lengthy discussion about email exchanges and phone calls between Mayce Torres, Administrator Heimer, the Town Clerk's Office, and the SEEC regarding ethics of grant disbursement and specificity required in filing a complaint with the board. A letter was drafted to Ms. Torres, which requested that her formal written complaint include the specific section(s) of the ordinance that she feels were violated by the Elicker Campaign.

The Torres Campaign has received no money from the Fund to date.

d. Financial Accounting Update - Fund Balance sheet.

The Fund received \$250,000 from the Board of Alders on 7/1/21 - as determined by the 2021-2022 City Budget.

6. New Business

The NHDF-sponsored Primary Debate has been scheduled for September 2, 2021. We are awaiting an invoice from the Shubert Theater and the Board of Education to use the theatre at Co-Op High School in downtown New Haven. O'Connell suggested that we move the event to a larger venue. Goode commented on the high production quality possible if the theater was used rather than a highschool auditorium. With COVID precautions, the Board Chair was hesitant to select a larger venue because it is unclear what requirements for social distancing and masking will be at that time. Administrator Heimer noted that this will be the first large public event held in any school since the closure of the facilities in April 2020.

Administrator Heimer has secured the participation of the New Haven Independent, la Voz Hispana, and the New Haven Register to set up the moderator panel. As soon as the venue is secure, TV and other news coverage will be notified of the event.